REMARKS

The Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection.

Claims 26-37 remain pending.

Claims 26-31, 33-34 and 36-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite with regard to the phrase coincides sufficiently. Although the Applicants believe that this phrase was properly defined (e.g., in claim 26 where it was recited, "wherein said first combination of information coincides sufficiently with said second combination of information for said relay portion to transfer the received packet from a second I/O port when said first I/O port and said packet transmission source address coincide with said I/O port and transmission source address that have been registered in advance with a correspondence therebetween"), claims 26 and 29 have amended to delete "sufficiently" and to define that it is determined that the first combination of information coincides with the second combination of information that has registered in advance when only the first (receiving) I/O port and the packet transmission source address coincide with the I/O port and transmission source address that have been registered in advance with a correspondence therebetween.

Although independent claims 32 and 35 did not recite the expression sufficiently, both of these have also been amended to specify that the determination is made as to whether a combination of only the first (receiving) I/O port and the packet transmission source address coincides with a combination of an I/O port and transmission source address that have been registered in advance with a correspondence therebetween.

In view of these amendments, the Applicants request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 26-27, 29-30, 33-34 and 36-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dobbins et al. U. S. Patent No. 5,485,455 (Dobbins) in view of Jain et al. U. S. Patent No. 6,311,218 (Jain) and Inoue et al. U. S. Patent No. 6,891,819 (Inoue). Claims 28 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dobbins, Jain, Inoue, and Townsend et al. U. S. Patent No. 5,661,719 (Townsend).

In view of the amendments to the independent claims specifying that the determination is made as noted above (that is, whether a combination of only the first (receiving) I/O port and the packet transmission source address coincides with a combination of an I/O port and transmission source address that has been registered in advance with a correspondence therebetween), it is believed that the combination was distinguished for each rejection, Dobbins failing to disclose or fairly suggest this limitation of the invention. In this regard, the Applicants note that the rejection disregarded the previously-claimed "coincides sufficiently" in view of the determination that "sufficiently" was indefinite. Therefore, there is no outstanding rejection that addresses the requirement that the combination of only the I/O port and a transmission source address coincides with the claimed content registered in advance is the basis for the claimed determination.

As previously argued, Dobbins requires both a transmission source MAC address and a destination MAC address and none of Jain, Inoue, and Townsend fulfills the missing requirement. Accordingly, no combination of these references can be said to render obvious the claimed invention.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Applicants request reconsideration of the rejection and allowance of the claims.

To the extent necessary, the Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of Mattingly, Stanger, Malur & Brundidge, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (referencing attorney docket no. ASA-838).

Respectfully submitted,

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